

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-31 are presented for consideration, with claims 1, 24, 29, and 31 being independent.

By this amendment, claims 1, 5, 11, 24, 29, and 31 have been amended to improve their form. Support for these amendments can be found in the specification, as originally filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Claims 3-6, 14-16, 19-23, 27, and 28 stand objected to for depending from a rejected claim. The Office Action indicates, however, that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have maintained these claims in dependent form, as Applicants earnestly believe that the claims from which they depend are allowable, as discussed in more detail below.

Claims 1, 2, 7-13, 17, 18, 24-26, and 29-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0121921 A1 (Burton et al.). Those claims also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Burton et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,069,125 (Antrim). Applicants traverse these rejections.

In one aspect of Applicants' invention, independent claim 1 recites a container including a bowl having a rim about its upper periphery and a lid having a lip. The lip has at least one vent and a continuous sealing bead about the periphery of the lid. The sealing bead includes at least one stepped portion offset relative to a remainder of said sealing bead in a direction of a height of the container. The lid is configured for

attachment to the bowl in a plurality of different orientations. In a first orientation, the lid is attached to the bowl with the sealing bead in continuous contact with the rim along the entire perimeter of the rim, thereby sealing the container. In a second orientation, the lid is attached to the bowl with the sealing bead in contact with the rim along at least a portion of the perimeter of the rim and the at least one vent region providing ventilation of the container.

In another aspect of Applicants' invention, independent claim 24 recites a container including a bowl having a rim about its upper periphery and a lid having sealing means including at least one stepped portion offset with respect to a remainder of said sealing means in a direction of a height of the container. The lid is configured for attachment to the bowl in a plurality of different orientations. In a first orientation, the lid is attached to the bowl and forms a continuous seal with the rim along the entire perimeter of the rim, thereby sealing the container. In a second orientation, the lid is attached to the bowl, such that the sealing means contacts only a portion of the rim, so as to allow ventilation of the container. The second orientation of the lid is offset about the vertical axis relative to the first orientation of the lid.

In a further aspect of Applicants' invention, independent claim 29 recites a bowl and a lid attachable thereto. One of the bowl and the lid has a rim extending around the perimeter thereof, and the other of the bowl and the lid has a lip with a continuous sealing bead for engagement with the rim. The continuous sealing bead includes a stepped portion offset with respect to a remainder of the sealing bead in a direction of a height of the container. The lid is configured for attachment to the bowl in a plurality of different orientations, including a first orientation in which the sealing bead is in continuous contact

with the rim along the entire perimeter of the rim, thereby sealing the container, and a second orientation in which the stepped portion of the sealing bead does not contact the rim, thereby providing ventilation of the container.

In yet another aspect of Applicants' invention, independent claim 31 recites a container including a bowl and a lid attachable thereto. One of the bowl and the lid has a rim extending around the perimeter thereof, and the other of the bowl and the lid has a lip with a continuous sealing bead for engagement with the rim. The rim includes at least one stepped portion having a height offset from a remainder of the rim. The sealing bead includes at least one stepped portion offset with respect to a remainder of the sealing bead in a direction of a height of the sealing bead. The lid is configured for attachment to the bowl in a plurality of different orientations. In a first orientation, the sealing bead is in continuous contact with the rim along the entire perimeter of the rim, thereby sealing the container. In a second orientation, the stepped portion of the rim does not contact the sealing bead, thereby providing ventilation of the container.

Applicants submit that many of these features are not taught or suggested by the cited art.

Burton et al. relates to cookware consisting of a lid 20 and a pot 22. The lid 20 may be placed on the pot 22 in different rotational positions to adjust an amount of venting. In an embodiment depicted in Figures 1-5, the lid 20 has four different sections A1, A2, A3, and A4, disposed rotationally about the lid. Sections A1 and A3 have an outer edge that extends farther radially than an outer edge of sections A2 and A4. Similarly, the pot 22 has sections B1, B2, B3, and B4, with an outer edge of sections B1 and B3 extending farther radially outwardly than an outer edge of section B2 and B4. When the lid

20 is placed on the pot 22 such that sections A1 and A3 align with sections B1 and B3, the lid 20 covers the entire opening of the pot 22. When the lid 20 is placed on the pot 22 such that sections A1 and A3 align with sections B2 and B4, a space is created between the outer edge of the lid 20 in sections A2 and A4 and the outer edge of the pot 22 in regions B1 and B3, thereby allowing venting from the pot.

Figures 6 and 7 of Burton et al. depict a second embodiment, in which a pot 23 for use with the lid 20 of the first embodiment (described above) includes four sections C1, C2, C3, and C4 disposed rotationally thereabout. Sections C1 and C3 preferably extend higher than sections C2 and C4. When the lid 20 is placed on the pot 23 such that sections A1 and A3 are positioned on the sections C1 and C3, lid 20 is in a non-venting position. When the lid 20 is rotated to align section A1 and A3 with section C2 and C4, the sections A1 and A3 are supported by sections C2 and C4 of the pot rim, and the greater height of sections C2 and C4 prevents sections A2 and A4 from contacting sections C1 and C3, thereby allowing venting from the pot.

Antrim, the secondary reference, is understood to be cited for teaching that a lid 12 can include a bead or lip 14 formed by turning under an outer-edge of the lid 12. The bead or lip 14 sits in a continuous channel 5 in a flange 3 of a vessel 1.

However, nowhere do Burton et al. and Antrim teach or suggest at least a sealing bead/sealing means having a stepped portion offset relative to a remainder of the sealing bead/sealing means in a direction of a height of the container, as recited in independent claims 1, 24, 29, and 31. Burton et al. contemplates sections of a sidewall of a cylindrical pot offset radially or vertically with respect to each other, and sections of a lid offset radially with respect to each other. Nowhere, however, does that publication discuss

- a sealing bead/sealing means having a stepped portion, as recited in the claims. Moreover,
the bead of Antrim is not stepped in any direction.

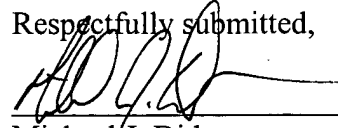
For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 24, 29, and 31 recite patentable features of Applicants' invention that define over Burton et al. and Antrim, whether those patents are taken alone or in combination. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of rejections of the independent claims are requested.

The remaining claims depend from one of the independent claims, and are believed to be allowable by virtue of their dependency, as well as for reciting other patentable features of Applicants' invention. Favorable and independent consideration of the dependent claims are requested.

Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to the address given below for S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.

Respectfully submitted,



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